

Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and/or Victimisation Policy

Procedure flow chart for complaints of Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and/or Victimisation - Appendix 9

Employees who believe they are being bullied or harassed may wish to discuss their particular situation before deciding what action to take. Employees can fully discuss the matter with their manager on an informal basis.

It is recognised that this may not always be appropriate in the circumstances. If this is the case, employees can discuss the situation with:

- the next higher level of management;
- with a Support Officer (refer to appendix 7 – Internal and External Support for a list of trained Support Officers, Support Officers can be contacted by those experiencing harassment and bullying ;
- or with a HR Advisor

Confidentiality will be maintained as far as possible.

If an employee decides not to take any action to deal with the problem and the circumstances described are very serious, Shropshire Council reserves the right to investigate the situation.

Informal Solution
Where possible an informal resolution will be found or formal proceedings may commence. Please see below, additional information can also be found at Appendix 5 – Informal Procedure for dealing with claims of bullying, discrimination and victimization. Where serious harassment or bullying occurs, employees can bring a formal complaint in the form of a Grievance.

Employees can choose to solve the matter themselves by simply approaching the harasser/bully, telling the harasser/bully that their behaviour is unwelcome and that it must stop, otherwise a formal complaint will be made.

Employees can seek support from a colleague, union representative or support officer to accompany them when speaking to the harasser/bully. This representative can speak the employees behalf if both are present and in agreement.

Employees can put their views in writing to the harasser/bully, telling them that their behaviour is unacceptable and that it must stop. The Council has trained a number of employees as Support Officers who can be contacted by those experiencing harassment and bullying, and who will provide support and guidance on how to handle the problem.

Mediation
Independent and impartial mediation conducted by a trained mediator will be made available to assist in the resolution of the dispute between the person who is being bullied or harassed and the perpetrator. If either party wishes to request third party mediation, he or she may do so by speaking to Human Resources. However mediation will only be considered where both parties agree to enter in to the process.

Concerns resolved through Information Resolution

Where informal solutions fail employees can bring a formal complaint in the form of a Grievance. Please see Grievance Procedure and appendix B.

Support

The Council recognises that issues of harassment and bullying can be difficult and stressful.

Support is also available from Occupational Health Service 01743 252833 and the external counselling service provided by Optima Health, telephone 01978 780479, email therapyservices@optimahealth.co.uk, website www.optimahealth.co.uk

Colleagues who may be experiencing emotional distress or mental health issues are also able to contact a mental health first aider (MHFA) for signposting to professional services and support.

See **appendix 7** for a list of mental health first aiders and other external sources of support.